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C O N F I D E N T I A L JERUSALEM 001980

SIPDIS

NEA FOR FRONT OFFICE; NSC FOR ABRAMS/RAMCHAND/PASCUAL; PRM
FOR RAMGOOLIE/BROOKS-RUBIN

E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/30/2018
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PBTS](#) [PREF](#) [PHUM](#) [KWBG](#) [KPAL](#) [IS](#)
SUBJECT: IDF DEMOLISHES HOMES IN TWO WEST BANK BEDOUIN
COMMUNITIES

REF: A. JERUSALEM 1841
[B](#). JERUSALEM 1712
[C](#). JERUSALEM 1612

Classified By: Consul General Jake Walles for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

[1](#). (SBU) Summary. On October 29 and 30, IDF soldiers demolished 25 structures in two Bedouin communities: one south of Hebron in Umm al-Khair, and one east of Ramallah in Mughayir al Dir. The demolitions leave 142 people, including 71 children, homeless. These are the first demolitions of inhabited structures in the West Bank since March 2008. Two structures, initially spared by the IDF because they housed orphans, are slated for demolition on November 2. End Summary.

Umm al-Khair Village

[2](#). (SBU) On October 29, the IDF demolished seven Bedouin structures -- six residences and one animal shelter -- in Umm al-Khair. Six of the structures received demolition orders in November 2007 because they lacked building permits. According to OCHA, one of the demolished residences had been constructed with a permit 40 years ago and was not under demolition order. Forty-five of the encampment's 125 residents lost their homes; all are UNRWA-registered refugees. UNRWA, OCHA, and ICRC responded by providing food, blankets, tents, and basic household items. UNRWA's Deputy Director for West Bank Operations told RefCoord October 30 that the families will likely attempt to rebuild their homes in the same location, as they have no other alternative.

Milehat-Ka'abneh Encampment at Mughayir al-Dir

[3](#). (SBU) On October 30, Poloffs visited the Milehat-Ka'abneh tribe's encampment at Mughayir al Dir near Ma'ale Mikhmas settlement after receiving news from OCHA of the impending demolition. On arrival at 1130 local, Poloffs witnessed a large bulldozer razing the last of 18 structures belonging to eight extended families comprising 97 people (Note: Photos are available on ConGen Jerusalem's classified website at <http://www.state.sgov.gov/p/nea/jerusalem/ind ex.cfm> under the link to Political Reporting Attachments. End note.). Bedouin residents, visibly upset, attempted to negotiate with the IDF soldiers, to retain the four water tanks and two tractors that, they said, the IDF was attempting to confiscate. Asserting that the area is a closed military zone, IDF soldiers prohibited Poloffs from approaching to engage local residents. The IDF departed the site at 1155 local, having confiscated one tractor.

[4](#). (SBU) Residents told Poloffs that a total of 20 structures had been under demolition order, but that the remaining two had been granted a temporary reprieve until

November 2 because they were inhabited by a number of orphans. OCHA contacts said it was unclear why the IDF acted on October 30, given that a legal intervention filed in recent days is still pending and that a stay of demolition is valid through November 1. Residents did not have documentation regarding their legal appeals and could not demonstrate to the IDF soldiers that a stay of demolition was in effect. Residents told OCHA that they had lived at the site since 1985, when the IDF moved them from a nearby location and built a one-room school for their use (which was not among the demolished structures).

Comment

15. (C) These two demolitions, within 24 hours of each other, represent the first demolitions of inhabited structures in the West Bank since March 2008, notwithstanding GOI commitments to the US not to carry out demolitions in area C.

USG intervention with the GOI may prevent the demolition of the two remaining structures at Mughayir al-Dir, which residents were told would happen on Sunday, November 2.

WALLES